Appointment of Lok Pal

*55. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has received a letter from the Lok Sevak Sangh of Servants of People Society, New Delhi, demanding immediate appointment of Lok Pal, disqualification of candidates with corrupt and criminal antecedents, and forfeiture of illegally acquired property of public servants including Ministers, MPs and MLAs;

(b) whether the Second Administrative Reforms Commission in its fourth Report, has also supported the above mentioned three demands; and

(c) if so, the time Government is likely to take to come forward with a legislation on Lok Pal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It is the endeavour of the Government to introduce in Parliament the Lokpal Bill which is in the advanced stage of finalization

Protest by Chinese Government

*56. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chinese Government has lodged an informal protest over the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, recently;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether the Government of China is still considering Arunachal Pradesh as their part;

(d) if so, whether Government has taken up/propose to take up the issue with the Chinese Government for an amicable solution; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Chinese side has raised the matter of Prime Minister's visit to Arunachal Pradesh with Government. The fact that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India has been conveyed to the Chinese side. China disputes the international boundary between India and China and illegally claims approximately 90,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The Special Representatives of India and China are discussing a framework for settlement of the boundary question that is fair, reasonable, mutually acceptable, and based on the Agreement on Guiding Principles and Political Parameters signed in April 2005.

Shortage of houses

*57. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of twenty-five million houses in the urban areas of the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the estimated shortage of dwelling units in the next year is likely to be far greater than the shortage, the country would face during the Eleventh Plan period;

(c) if so, whether Government has formulated any housing policy for urban areas in the country; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to implement the above policy in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) According to the estimations of the Technical Group constituted by the Ministry for assessment of the urban housing shortage at the end of the Tenth Five Year plan, the total housing shortage in the country is 24.71 million. During the Eleventh Five Year Plan period, the total urban housing requirement including the backlog and additional requirement is estimated as 26.53 million dwelling units.

(c) and (d) The new National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy 2007 has been laid in both Houses of the Parliament on 7.12.2007. Land being a State subject, State Governments have to take steps for implementation of initiatives envisaged in the policy. The Policy has been widely publicised and has been forwarded to all States/Union Territories as well as to various Ministries of the Central Government and other implementing agencies for creation of supportive environment by preparation of State Urban Housing and Habitat Policies and Action Plan, review of legal and regulatory regimes, promotion of optimal utilization of land by innovative spatial incentives and development of green field towns and integrated urban housing extensions of existing towns. It also provides for promotive various types of Public-Private Partnerships for augmenting the housing stock.

India's meetings with IAEA

†*58. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that talks are on between representatives of India and International Atomic Energy Agency under Indo-US nuclear pact agreement;

(b) if so, the number of rounds of talks so far held in this regad;

(c) whether it has become a controversial issue between both the parties during the talks; and

(d) by when the talks are likely to become a success?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Four rounds of discussions have been held so far. The first round was held in November 2007, second in December 2007 and third and fourth in January 2008.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. Discussions have taken place on all issues related to a Safeguards Agreement and during the first four rounds, substantial progress has been made. Further discussions are scheduled during February 25-27, 2008. All efforts are being made to complete the process as soon as possible. However, it is difficult to prejudge when the talks are likely to become a success.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.